

SULGRAVE PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON THURSDAY 20TH NOVEMBER 2014
IN SULGRAVE CHURCH HALL AT 7.45PM

Councillors Present

Andrew Waite, Sally Harding, Clare Pollak, Jo Powell, Graham Roberts, Christine Coles (Parish Clerk) and twenty six villagers.

1a. Apologies

Cllr Russell, Mr and Mrs Dixon and Mrs Ford

1b. Declaration of Interests

The Chair declared an interest in the planning application at Fleet Farm, Little Street.

2a. To approve and sign minutes of the meeting of 9th October 2014

An amendment to page three, item 8b, line five, the word 'Green' deleted from the sentence 'including the Stocks and Castle signboard'. The minutes were then agreed and signed. Proposed by Cllr Powell and seconded by Cllr Pollak.

2b. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising to discuss.

3. Guest Speaker, Iain Anderson (IA) of Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs

Mr Anderson thanked the Parish Council for the invitation to the meeting. He belongs to the National Association of Youth Clubs which is a charitable organisation and has been running for 50 years. His role is to support youth activity and clubs. He would be able to help start and set up a club in Sulgrave. There are resources for new groups such as safeguarding, training and equipment. The charity is based at Kings Park and is being funded by Northants County Council for two years. Their work is commissioned out and their turnover is £300M. They have a number of residential outdoor centres and action centres which are their main sources of income.

IA covers South Northants and his office base is in Brackley. He has been with the company for four years and his role is to support opportunities in the rural community. He is currently working with forty groups in South Northants. There are currently groups in Towcester, Brackley, Croughton, Syresham, Brackley and Middleton Cheney. Sulgrave did have a youth club but the willingness of a community will help start another one up. 2/3 volunteers would be needed to set up a club. Iain would help the set up and then take it to the point where the volunteers are happy to take it on themselves. Volunteers could either be parents with younger children or those with an interest. The age range is 8 to 18 years. This is quite a broad age range so there might be two groups. One for the younger children 8-13 years and another group for the older ones.

The Chair asked what activities could be considered? IA replied that it could be varied. It might be sports, special interest groups or in an open space. The Chair noted that Sulgrave has a wonderful Pocket Park which the Parish Council are trying to re-energise. It could be an educational project and include nature and conservation. The Chair asked how would they would bring the idea about? IA replied that some villages are very positive and have a building already. Volunteers are needed but it does depend on the willingness and commitment of the community. Groups tend to grow and children know if they like it or not.

The question was asked how regularly the group would meet. It would depend on the number of volunteers but two would be needed to start with. The ratio of adults to children is 1 adult to 10 children.

Finally, the Chair suggested that a link would be put on the village website. IA left the meeting.

4. Planning

- S/2014/1959/TCA, Tree work at Bower House, Park Lane. For info only.
- S/2014/1962/TCA, Tree work at The Old Manse, Little Street. For info only.
- S/2014/1784/FUL, Replacement white UPVC windows to front elevation at Belmont, Little Street. No objections raised.
- S/2014/1868/FUL, Installation of 120 ground mounted solar PC panels at Windmill Orchards. No objections raised.
- S/2014/2036/FUL, *Proposed residential development of 4 no dwellings at land rear of Fleet Farm, Little Street.* Under consideration.

The meeting was attended by Mr Henn, the applicant and Roger Coy, the architect. The plan is to cease farming activities and demolish some of the existing buildings. Fleet Farmhouse will remain as it is. The barn off the access road will stay and provide garaging for Fleet Farmhouse. The grain dryer which is noisy is being removed. The wagon hovel will be refurbished for open parking. Two pre application discussions have been held with SNC already. The plan is to replicate the small farmyard complex and preserve and enhance the conservation area. The applicant has read the Village Design Statement and the latest pre-application has been supported. The farm will be run from the centre and the core activity such as noise, pollution and contamination will be removed. Farms are much bigger, noisier and out of scale now. The new buildings will be of a lower scale and there will be more openness. The applicant is proposing to put a new hedge on the boundary line with the open countryside.

Mr Henn noted his reason for this application. He wants to run the farm from the centre as it is harder to get down Little Street with his farming vehicles which are getting bigger.

From the floor Mrs Foster asked if the other buildings will be sold off? Fleet Farmhouse will stay as one entity. There will be a maximum of five dwellings including Fleet Farmhouse.

The Chair asked if there had been discussions on technical input with the sewage. Mr Coy replied that the Environment Agency had no comment to make and English Heritage had no objections.

This development is outside of the village envelope and the question was asked what is there to stop the development getting bigger? Mr Coy replied that the plans have been carefully negotiated and it will not go beyond five properties. To build beyond five there would need to be an adopted road. Mr Foster asked if they were likely to get approval for back access. The answer was no and it is not their intention to ask.

Some people were concerned the development would set a precedent. Although it is outside of the village confine, there are other areas where buildings could be put. Mr Coy replied that each application is considered on its own merit and has to be looked at individually. They are hoping this application will be viewed favourably by SNC.

Mr Christy expressed concern about restricted infill. Sulgrave is a conservation area and this is one of three sites that could be considered for development. People will be worried and he urged the Parish Council to listen to the concerns of villagers and ensure the use of infill is restricted.

Mr Henn noted that the government has allowed the demolition of farm buildings to be replaced. Mr Prior noted that this footprint is bigger than the previous one.

Mrs Blayney felt that starter homes should be considered as there are no homes for the young people to remain in the village.

Cllr Harding spoke about the sewage problems in Little Street. Mrs Blayney who lives in Little Street has to ring Anglian Water every 3-4 weeks as the filters cannot cope. Mr Henn said the main problem is that Anglian Water are not cleaning the filters.

The question was asked what the buildings will be made of? The answer was stone and slate and timber painted. The Chair asked if the new houses will look like barns. It was confirmed the concept will be barn/farmyard.

This concluded the discussion on the planning application at Fleet Farm.

- *S/2014/2063/LBC, Demolition of dilapidated single storey extension and replacement single storey extension and alterations to the stairwell and first floor bathroom and bedroom arrangement and WC at ground floor level and S/2014/2062/FUL, Replacement single storey extension at Sulgrave Stores. Under consideration.*

Councillors had asked for more detail on the roof. It will be a standing seam roof. From the floor the question was asked how high the extension will be? It will be 2 foot 6 inches. Mr Coy was able to advise that the owners are trying to complete the refurbishment as per the previous planning approval. The owners are keen to get on but have to get the detail correct which is frustrating for them. Minor conditions have been discharged and the more key issues are in hand with the Roger Coy Partnership. The Chair said it was good to see the refurbishment taking place and the detail being done in the right way.

Cllr Pollak mentioned the old adverts outside which have disappeared. She assumed they would be left in place. The applicants have discussed with SNC about re-pointing the gable end. The Chairman has spoken to the Conservation Officer at SNC about this point and if the signs were repainted it would be fakery. Mr Coy could not see why the re-pointing could not be done carefully and the signs conserved with careful maintenance and repair.

Mr Taylor asked if there was an update on the moving of the Post box outside Sulgrave Stores. The Parish Clerk has advised the Post office of the new position and is meeting their representative on 20th January 2015.

5. Councillors Reports

Fingerpost sign opposite the Magpie - This was reported to the Street Doctor but they thought it was a footpath sign. The mistake has now been rectified and reported as a broken road sign.

Bus Shelter - Some of the timber is soft and requires refurbishment. The Chair has asked two builders to inspect the shelter and give prices. To be considered in the New Year.

Refurbishment of Church Hall - Cllr's Waite and Powell have completed a survey of the hall and the Chair has drawn up sketch proposals. This is work in progress.

New Notice-board - This is work in progress.

6. **To discuss issues relating to Pocket Park equipment**

- To agree the cost of £102.00 to replace the broken basketball hoop in Pocket Park. It was agreed to accept this quote.

7. **To receive an update on the village lighting project. To consider the funding and application for a Public Works Loan (paper circulated)**

Cllr Roberts advised that the existing street lighting has been in place for 25 years. The equipment is in poor condition and is deteriorating. There are new government rules. This project was started some time ago, in 2011. A grant was received from Cllr Ben Smith to commission a detailed report from an engineer. The project was then put on hold as other projects like Pocket Park were being considered. The Parish Council revisited the project in January 2014 and a full report has now been submitted to the Parish Councillors and will be put on the website.

A consultation article was put in the recent newsletter which is an opportunity for feedback from villagers.

The plan is to replace the columns which are currently of a mixed type. The old cropped wooden poles belong to the Parish Council. There are no services on them. However they are old and will rot over time. There are a couple of concrete columns in Towrise and at the bottom of Little Street. They are liable to concrete cancer which is where the steel reinforcement is corroded. A modern bracket will be fixed to a service pole and the column replaced with a brand new one which is a proposed galvanised steel column. Since the newsletter was published, various questions have been asked about why steel columns have been chosen and can LED lighting be used? Cllr Roberts has looked at the sodium lighting cost and there would be a nominal increase to have LED lighting. Assurances have been given that the harsh white light which used to be seen in LED lights has now been softened. There will be an increase in costs to have LED lights. The steel columns are cost effective and recommended in rural areas. There are lots of different styles of columns but some are extremely expensive.

Cllr Roberts then prepared a technical spec and emailed this to a number of contractors earlier in the year. Two sensible responses were received. Some companies did not respond as the contract was too small and not cost effective. One contractor was selected and the overall cost for installation and services is £30K plus VAT which can be reclaimed. There will be a slight amendment to these figures for the LED lights.

Cllr Roberts has looked at grant funding but not been successful. The other way to fund this would be through a Public Works Loan which would be paid back through the precept.

The Chair asked about the energy saving that would be made over the year. The additional cost to change to LED lights is £1550.00 To move from sodium to LED fitting would amount to a 68% energy saving (or 3880 lumens). The lamp would have a 25 year life and would never need to be changed. Current bulbs are 80 watts and LED lights would be 30 watts.

From the floor, Mr Henn suggested the Parish Council look at the wider spectrum and consult other villages. The price might reduce if villages join together. Cllr Roberts had not considered this point but other villages would need to be at the same stage. He agreed to make enquiries.

Mrs Blayney asked if the village is obliged to have street lighting. Cllr Roberts replied that the matter has been discussed before but it was felt to be retrograde to go back to no lighting. There has to be some lighting for people to be able to get about safely and a lot of previous discussions have been held about going dark.

It was felt the Main Road should be lit and the S bend in particular in School Street. Some footpaths are in a poor condition. There will be an opportunity to change the lighting times for example switching off at midnight.

Mrs Foster said she was not in favour with the proposed street poles and they are not suitable for Sulgrave. The choice was made by recommendation and the Parish Council are not compelled to have these ones. The question is how much cost does the village want to bear on the project. There may be savings in energy costs which is one of the biggest items of expenditure. Mr Foster suggested that the money saved with the new lights is put into an account and put towards the loan costs. Mr Prior asked what the current lighting expenditure was but these figures were not available at the meeting. He also asked the interest rate on the Public Works Loan. To borrow £30K over 20 years would cost £41,145.00 to pay back at an interest rate of 3.28%. The half yearly cost would be £1K.

Mr Christy asked if there was a village nearby with this type of proposed lanterns. Cllr Roberts will check but thought it was Aston Le Walls. The question was asked if the lights would be movement controlled but nobody was aware of this type of light.

Another point raised was that there are too many lights in the village. Cllr Roberts replied that the level of lighting is far higher in new housing estates. Whilst the Parish Council may consider reducing the lights, the impact of safety on pedestrians and drivers has to be considered.

Mrs Blayney asked if the number of street lamps could be reduced to save money. The current contract will be for an old column to be replaced with a new one. There will be an additional cost to cap electrical cables where poles are missing and to move lights.

Cllr Roberts concluded the discussion by thanking everyone for raising questions. He will revisit this at the next meeting. He will look at quotations for other styles of columns such as Victorian or contemporary types. Cllr Harding suggested that a photo of each type with prices is published in the next newsletter although this will not be available for the December issue. Mr Coy noted that the lights in Eydon were replaced some time ago with a Victorian lamp standard. As the village is in a conservation area, the Parish Council were able to get a conservation grant.

The Chair thanked Cllr Roberts for all his work on this project to date.

8. To discuss the renewal of the Shop Lease agreement

The Clerk advised that the shop lease agreement ran out in September 2014. It was a five year lease and renewed last in 2009. The Village Shop Committee currently pay an annual rent of £1500.00 and the two Public Works Loans payments total £2716.00. There are eleven years remaining on the loan. The Village Shop Committee have provided a set of up to date accounts to 31st December 2013 which were circulated to councillors.

The Chair proposed the Parish Council agree an extension of the lease for ten years at the same yearly rent of £1500.00. All councillors approved.

Action: The Parish Clerk to contact Lewis Thomas who has agreed to prepare the paperwork at a reduced rate.

9. Finance

- a) *To approve the following payments:*
- £30.00 to Parish Clerk (contribution to broadband costs)
 - £50.00 to Parish Clerk (float)
 - £552.00 to RD Landscapes (grass cutting September)
 - £276.00 to RD Landscapes (grass cutting October)

Proposed by Cllr Powell and seconded by Cllr Pollak.

11. Correspondence

From

- Northants CALC, Quality Parish Scheme. A new scheme is being launched in the New Year. Cllr Roberts added that quality status does not influence South Northants at all. In his opinion it only satisfies a request by government. One advantage is to set a council apart from lesser councils.
- Northants CALC, Rights of Way and the Definitive Map Training Course. This has been sent to the Footpath Warden.
- Northants CALC, Budget Information 2015/16. This will be considered at the January meeting when the budget is discussed.

12. Open Forum

Mrs Blayney asked if there was an update on broadband. The Chair replied he has looked at the website where there is an interactive map. More enquiries will be made.

Mr Prior asked if the bank up Park Lane was included on the current grass cutting specification. Cllr Roberts was unsure and said he would check. Two extra areas have been included recently without extra charge. Mr Prior did not want it added if there was an extra charge for it.

Mr Taylor spoke about the drainage problems in Manor Road. Some dye testing has taken place and come back negative. Highways have looked down nine gullies and found no sewage nor problems. There will be site meeting on 26th November. The Chair asked Mr Taylor to involve the Parish Council in all emails between the parties.

Mr Taylor asked if there was an update on the defibrillator. Mrs Blayney replied that the Village Shop Committee are waiting for planning permission. The post and electrics are in hand.

Mr Christy spoke about the inspection report of Pocket Park and asked if work was in hand. He also asked if the work would form part of the budget process as the Parish Council have a duty of care. The Chair replied that it is work in progress and would be part of the budget process.

Mrs Blayney reported some white lines which have been marked in Little Street. She believes that Highways have painted the lines as they plan to remove grass verges. The Parish Council were not aware of this work and thanked Mrs Blayney for bringing it to the meeting.

13. Date and time of next meeting

11TH December 2014 at 7.45pm at the Church Hall.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm